

Missions -
Study

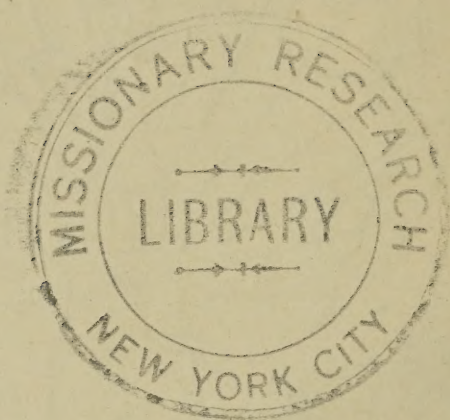
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Missions -
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How Shall We Study Missions?



Acknowledgement.

We acknowledge with appreciation the contribution of the Department of Missionary Education, Board of Christian Education, Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., in sharing with us the results of a successful program of mission study and Schools of Missions.

How Shall We Study Missions?

A Manual on Missionary Education in the Local Church

THE PLACE OF MISSIONARY EDUCATION

One of the primary emphases of the Christian Church is its missionary outreach. It is therefore bound to study, preach, plan, pray for, and support missions.

"The missionary movement, in other words, is the Church working in those areas of the world where Christ is fully known. It is, in fact, not a movement at all, nor an enterprise, nor a cause appealing for the interest and support of the Church in competition with other causes. It is the Church itself reaching out into the community, the nation, and the world."

While the Church has committed to certain agencies, or Boards, the administration of special fields of missionary work, these agencies are in reality but the trustees of the Church for the carrying out of its major work, the conversion of mankind in all parts of the world, at home or abroad. Missions, then, are not marginal interests but basic in the life and work of the Church.

The Responsibility of the Whole Church

No one can be wholly Christian unless he feels the obligation to share in the outreach of the Church into the neglected areas of our own land, into the unevangelized social, industrial and political areas everywhere, and into the hearts of men, women and children throughout the world. One might just as well omit the love of God as to omit the outreach of that love working through the Church on behalf of men for whom the Son of God died.

Missions, therefore, is the responsibility of the whole Church and not of any one society or section of the membership; and demands the intelligent, sustained support of the whole Church. To achieve this the Church must educate its constituency in the world mission of the Christian Church as well as in the specific missionary responsibilities of either the denomination or of the local church.

The Church Must Study Missions

Christian education is not truly Christian if it is not at heart missionary. It is not enough to have a missionary society, an occasional missionary sermon or even a yearly missionary rally or a mission fest. Missions should be integrated into the program of every organization of the church.

A world-minded church is known by the way missions is continually emphasized and sustained in its message and program. It shines through

the worship, the sermons, the mid-week services and the teaching program. It takes form in the activities and program of the youth organizations. It appears in a benevolent budget equal to and planned with the same care as the local budget, comparable in size and urgency. It shows in the way its membership responds to emergency needs and calls for special help, in friendliness to newcomers, care of those who are sick or in trouble and concern over community problems. It is manifested in the giving of life to full-time Christian service.

The Entire Church Studying Missions

In order to be educationally effective, something more is needed beyond a general emphasis and sincere belief in missions. There must be a specific and definite approach; and this can best be attained through organized study and special emphasis at certain periods, when concrete missionary problems and particular mission fields are studied.

A single, isolated presentation of missions, effective though it may be, is seldom enough to leave a lasting educational result. There must be continuity. There are many ways by which this can be secured. A series of Sunday addresses, mid-week services, church nights, or study classes, is always more satisfactory than single meetings scattered through the year. Variety in presentation also strengthens the effect. Forums, panel discussions, drama, visual aids, work projects, talks by missionaries or Board representatives, and exhibits all help to make missions real to the members of a church.

In many churches short-term courses for adults and young people are held each year. A course on some phase of missions might well be included in any of the following projects:

Leadership Training Schools
Schools of Religion
Week Night Institutes

Church Nights
Learning for Life Schools
College of Life

THE CHURCH SCHOOL OF MISSIONS

No project is so well adapted to making the entire church conscious of the value of studying missions, as is the well-tested method of The Church School of Missions. This has been defined as "the whole church (so far as possible) engaged in the study of some phase of the work that is being done for the extension of Christ's Kingdom in the world."

The School of Missions usually meets from four to six weeks, one evening a week, either Sunday evening or on a week night. It is a school in that it has several simultaneous classes, and uses textbooks and other educational materials and devices. Six such weekly sessions are found to give more satisfactory results than a shorter school.

The Courses

In some churches two schools of missions are held each year, one on Domestic and the other on Foreign Missions. The first may be held dur-

ing the weeks that lead up to Thanksgiving, the other during January and February or during Lent. Ordinarily it is better to have one well-planned school, enthusiastically received. In this case, Domestic and Foreign Missions may be studied on alternate years, or the program may be built to include classes in both—the choice being left to the desire of the groups.

The Mission Study Themes for the year are usually selected for the courses of study. They are prepared through the cooperation of the various denominations in the Missionary Education Movement. These courses on a well-developed theme are arranged for all age-groups, based on the grading usually found in the church school departments. Interesting informing, attractive reading and pictorial books are provided, leader's guides, visual aids and drama suggestions, as well as suggestions regarding the specific work of our own denomination in the field studied are available for groups from the Primary department, through Junior, Junior-High, High School to the Adult groups.

The Schedule

The division of the evening into periods should be planned to suit the local church, or community situation. A full hour should be set aside for the group, or class, session; and one-half hour to forty-five minutes for the general session, or assembly, when motion pictures, speakers, or special features are used.

Sunday evening schools may be held at the time of the usual Young People's Sunday evening meeting; and in churches where there is a Sunday evening service this may climax the evening. Where there is no Sunday Evening service, the school may well be held at that time.

Week night Schools of Missions often begin with a simple Church Night supper, especially in communities where there are many who commute daily to business. The school should adjourn not later than nine o'clock.

The following are widely used schedules:

Supper	Group Sessions
Worship	Sunday Evening or
Group Sessions	Midweek Service
General Session	
Group Sessions	Worship
General Worship	Group Sessions
and Program	General Session

The Supper

At least one supper meeting during the course of the school of missions is desirable. Sometimes this is held at the beginning, sometimes at

the end of the series. A six weeks' course is often opened and closed with a fellowship supper. One or both of these may well carry out the theme studied during the school. Decorations, food, the costumes of the assistants, should carry out the theme (or country). As guests of honor, specialists in the area studied may be invited. If a supper is a part of the schedule for each evening, it should be as simple as possible, in order that all may attend the group sessions of the school. "Family worship" often very naturally takes place around the supper table, before the groups separate.

The Group or Class Sessions

The group sessions, or classes, should be organized for as many age groups as possible, following the departmental divisions of the Sunday School. Large, unwieldy groups, especially of young people and adults, should be subdivided, if the most effective results are to be secured. The best plan has been found to be that of dividing the groups so as to include not more than twenty persons in each. Larger groups prevent the discussions from being vital. For, after all, more lasting educational results are secured through active participation in discussion than through passive listening to a lecture. Many churches are finding it possible to interest more men in such a study if a separate group is formed for them, preferably under the leadership of a man.

The younger children often meet during the hour before supper, sometimes earlier in the afternoon; in some places the classes for children are held on another day of the week.

Textbooks should be on hand for sale to the members of the adult and young people's groups. In the younger departments sufficient books should be provided for reference and browsing table purposes. Maps planned for use with the courses should all be provided. Prices of mission study materials have been set so as to be within the financial possibilities of even small churches.

General Sessions

In addition to the group sessions, it is important that the entire school, or at least the young people and adults, should meet at least once each evening for a general session. This offers an opportunity for introducing outside speakers; for presenting a missionary play, a "radio roundup," or some form of the now popular interview, "Information, Please," or quiz type of program; or for showing one of the many excellent missionary motion pictures, some in kodachrome or sound, which are now being produced by church Boards of Missions. Motion pictures should be used, not merely for entertainment or enlightenment, but as a part of a co-ordinated program of worship and consecration.

At some point in the general sessions, the work of our Mission Boards should be vigorously presented; and outcomes such as the support of missionaries or the initiation of community projects should be urged. The concluding general session should be so planned as to be a memorable climax to the entire course.

Organizing the School of Missions

The success of a school of missions, as is the case with every other church project, lies in careful planning. The entire church—the pastor, the consistory, and the leaders of the Church School, the young people's societies, and the men's and women's organizations—must be solidly behind the enterprise. An alert and inventive promotion committee must be responsible for publicity, attendance, and advertising. Announcements from the pulpit or notices inserted in the church calendar are seldom effective in insuring the success of the school.

Specific responsibilities should be assigned to individuals or subcommittees. The **promotion committee**, already mentioned, would be charged with the work of enrolling people for the school. Personal calls are the most effective producers of results in this work. Some form of registration slip should be prepared and distributed throughout the organizations for individual enrollment. To calls should be added all the other facilities for spreading the news—notice in the church calendar, from the pulpit, in the newspapers, and also posters (these might well be made by a young people's group).

The **curriculum committee** should be very representative and should work with the pastor in planning the courses for the school, choosing the theme, selecting and securing the teachers, worship leaders, special speakers, et cetera.

A **house committee** should select the rooms in which the classes are to meet, check to be sure that they are in condition for each session, equipped with blackboards, maps, and other desired "tools for the task." This committee too should have responsibility for helping to build an atmosphere of worship in the room chosen for that purpose. This should be varied from night to night for best results.

The **literature committee** should maintain a literature table at all sessions, containing textbooks (if these are to be made available for sale) and free pamphlet materials dealing with the subjects studied; it should also handle the ordering of texts for teachers, and other materials for use in the schools, such as maps, motion picture films, et cetera. This committee should secure from the Mission Boards or the Department of Missionary Education special material available to supplement the theme.

Financing the School of Missions

Some churches set aside a small amount for this in the yearly church budget. If the textbooks are bought by the members of the groups in the older classes, and if each pays the price of the simple supper, the amount needed for a school is not great. Some churches take an offering to finance the school at each general session. Others make a feature of the offering at the closing session of the school, giving it as a gift to the field studied. As a matter of practice it is better to have the cost of the school underwritten by the Consistory, or through the cooperation of the organizations participating. The offerings may then be applied to the school if desired.

VARIATIONS OF THE SCHOOL OF MISSIONS

The Church Week of Missions

A variation of the church schools of missions now growing in popularity is the church week of missions. As its name implies, this usually consists of a series of four to six meetings commencing on a Sunday morning or evening, continuing through the week, and culminating on the following Sunday. The school of missions procedure is followed throughout.

A sermon on a topic such as "Missions, the World Outreach of the Church," would be appropriate on the first Sunday. Classes could be held Monday through Friday nights, and the following Sunday morning two to three persons of real ability might be given three minutes each to tell the church about the value and high lights of interest in the course. The pastor might summarize activities recommended for the church by the study groups. A speaker sent by one of the Mission Boards of the Church might have a place on the second Sunday program, and motion pictures prepared by the Boards should be used in a culminating service on Sunday evening.

This type of concentrated emphasis has considerable value. It is especially recommended for those churches which have opportunities to have a missionary whom they may support wholly or in part, with them for a week, or who can invite a furloughed missionary to give a week of time to the church, not as a speaker only, but as a resource leader in the sessions of the school. Successful weeks of missions are held, however, without such assistance. Two dangers should be guarded against: that of reducing the school to three sessions, meeting on Wednesday and the two Sunday evenings; and that of assuming, after the week's work has been completed, that the church need not be concerned about missions throughout the remainder of the year. Especially thorough preparation should be made before the opening of the school, for there will naturally be little time between sessions for the completion of assignments and reports and the planning and rehearsings of dramatizations, forums, and panels.

The Adult School of Missions

The interest in adult education in certain sections of the country has given an impetus to the organization of adult schools of missions, or schools of missions for adults and young people only. When this is done, several courses in missions and allied subjects are offered. The general sessions are frequently devoted to a popular presentation of each of the course themes in turn. The following are among the courses that have been used to advantage in such schools:

The Foreign Theme for the Year.	"Missions and Social Action."
The Domestic Theme for the Year.	"Missions in the World Today."
"Missions and World Peace."	"The Bible and Missions."
"The Missionary Work of Our Church."	"Missions and Christian Education."
"The Validity of Missions."	"Missions and Stewardship."

The Interorganizational School

In certain churches, during the period of missionary emphasis, the entire group never meets together at one time. Each organization of the church, however, arranges to study missions in its own way during a given period, the members of the Men's Fellowship participating in a reading club, followed by a service project; the adult Bible class following a six-session elective on missions on Sunday morning; the departments of the Church School each emphasizing missions in their worship sessions or holding short-term elective courses outside Church School hours; the young people's societies women's groups, and other organizations engaging in study groups of various types. In addition to this group study, the themes used by the societies are presented in succession at the Sunday evening or week night service, during the period, the members of each group assisting in such presentations. A radio broadcast program might be presented by the adult class, a drama by the young people, a panel discussion by the men's club, and so forth. In certain instances in which this plan is followed, the entire group meets together once during the year, annually at a supper meeting, after which a varied program is presented. In other instances, the pastor or the church council, rather than the various groups, is responsible for the midweek or Sunday night emphases.

Methods

Much has been written about methods to be used in presenting missions: the study class, the discussion group, the forum, the panel discussion, the lecture, the round table, the program meeting, the quiz, the conversation, the relay class, and many other procedures. In the leader's guides, published in connection with each mission study book, and in the denominational materials, assistance is given, that in the hands of an intelligent and resourceful leader, should result in worth-while and effective group sessions or classes. Such materials should be procured far enough in advance to enable the leader or the committee to prepare adequately.

Leadership

A continual search should be made for new leadership. High school teachers, social workers, Christians from foreign-language or racial groups, businessmen who have traveled abroad, newspaper people, are often drawn into the circle of the school of missions as resource leaders or members of panels, and after such an introduction are sometimes secured as teachers in ensuing years.

Adult missionary education should be kept on the high level of secular adult education. If this is done, no difficulty will be met in securing adequate leadership. The fifteen-minute casual "book review" given by an ill-equipped leader, "discussions" by persons who are not sure of the facts they are discussing, and similar expedients, do more than anything else to degrade missionary education in the eyes of church members. Even the best book reviews, when not followed by discussion or action, are lacking in educational values.

Atmosphere

More attention needs to be given to the creation of missionary atmosphere during the period of the school of missions. Exhibits, costumes, and curios are helpful. Returned Service Men may be able to contribute some. In smaller towns the libraries and the public schools may have equipment that can be borrowed or rented for the occasion. Book tables, curio collections, and bulletin boards should be kept up to the minute by committees appointed for that purpose. The group responsible for the creation of worship atmosphere will find valuable assistance in materials that may be borrowed from Oriental shops or from individuals who have traveled extensively and acquired treasures from other lands. We ought to be very alert to use the reproductions from Christian art in other lands, which have been so numerous in recent years—pictures, photographs of sculpture and architecture, et cetera. The recent series of books by Daniel Johnson Fleming, published by the Missionary Education Movement, will furnish many inspirations along these lines.* The music of other nations could often be brought into a worship service by someone from the music department of the schools or by a musician in the community. However, this medium should be used only if it is possible to have the presentation made by an expert.

Reading

We cannot assume a sustained missionary interest without providing frequent stimulation. The intervals between special missionary emphases should be bridged by missionary reading of varied types. A missionary library of up-to-date books made easily accessible at a table in the lobby, where they may be drawn out at the close of the service, serves a real need. It is possible often to insert some book reviews into a woman's work program. If your church boasts a librarian or a teacher with a world vision, who could be put in charge of missionary reading, she would find ingenious ways of increasing the vision of the members through reading. The Men's Book Club, as developed in certain sections of the country, is one of the best means of interesting men in missions that has appeared up to this time.

HOW OTHERS HAVE DONE IT SUCCESSFULLY

One church in the Midwest says, "Our school of missions makes an invaluable contribution to our church life. Church people come by families to a potluck supper; this is followed by a fifteen-minute devotional period, conducted by a different group each night. The group then divides into six classes, which care for all ages from a Beginners-Primary group on up. The dismissal is at eight o'clock—early enough so that the children may all attend. The book table is an important feature in this school."

One church, realizing the futility of expecting teachers who have had no special background for it to teach missions, had one class in its

*Titles: *Each with His Own Brush*; *Christian Symbols in a World Community*.

school of missions taught by the Church School superintendent for his teaching staff, in order that they might consider together not only the subject matter of a textbook but also methods and other resources of information. Practically every teacher in this Church School was in this normal class, and stayed by it to the end.

A pastor writes thus of his school of missions: "Everybody gathers at 6:30 for dinner, which is served free. Each organization has responsibility for furnishing the meal but once, so that the burden comes to each family just a single time during the school. Seated around the table we have devotions, followed by a special item—sometimes music, sometimes a dramatization. Then all are dismissed to classes, of which there are six. The school is all over before 8:30 o'clock. The church has about six hundred members. This school is about the only event of the entire year when the whole family can come and find something of interest and value regardless of age. It works!"

STUDY THEMES AND RESOURCE MATERIALS

1946-1947

India

Christianity and Race

1947-1948

World Evangelism

1948-1949

China

America's Geographical Frontiers

(Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Canal Zone, Alaska)

Textbooks and guides will be available for these themes for all age groups. Send for announcement folder each year.

Bibliography

Missionary Education in Your Church—Harner & Baker. Cloth \$1.00

Into All the World—Casselman. 35¢.

Our Church In Action—Sessler (with a guide on "How To Use") 25¢.

Loan Library

The Reformed Church maintains a free Loan Library with a large section of books on missions for all ages.

Motion Pictures

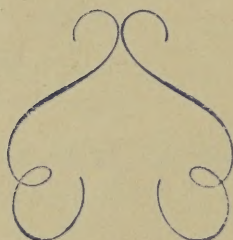
Motion pictures and slides on Reformed Church missions as well as those on general world missions at home and abroad are available for rent. Make your requests well in advance of the showing date.

Records for Phonographs

This new method of presenting true missionary stories in dramatic form is recommended to Church Schools, vacation and week-day schools, and to women's groups. Records come either in a series or singly. Rental 50¢ per record.

Special Material

Study Packets on various Mission fields.....	50¢
Primary Missionary Teaching Pictures and Stories.....	60¢
Primary Missionary Programs (while they last).....	15¢
Junior Missionary Programs (while they last).....	15¢
Missionary Stories to Tell. Cloth, \$1 paper.....	60¢
More Missionary Stories to Tell. Cloth, \$1 paper.....	60¢



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